

ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION AUGUST 2019

A Way of Censorship

by Lee Duigon

[Note: This news is breaking day by day, and often more than once a day, so it's unavoidable that some of this writing will be out of date by the time it's published. But one thing that won't be out of date is the current wave of Internet censorship—all of it aimed at Christians and political conservatives. I have been tracking this for months.]



June 26, 2019: The Chalcedon website,¹ is down. We don't know the cause, and six hours in, we haven't been able to get it back on line.

Coincidentally (or not!), this comes on the heels of a left-wing journalist saying he's "investigating" Chalcedon. Here's what he originally wrote: "I'm a journalist working on a story. I'm not making a specific abuse report. My story is about tech companies that provide technical services to the websites of hate groups. I was enquiring about the website <http://www.chalcedon.edu>. This group was brought to my attention by the Southern Poverty Law Center."

Chalcedon president Mark Rushdoony says complaints made to the server are "trying to blackmail these business entities from doing business with us: stop hosting our server, cut it off." Many such complaints have been made over the years, he added, but lately there have been "more attempts than in the past."

"They won't tell you what you did wrong," he said, nor have any of the complainers ever contacted Chalcedon for a clarification of any of its positions. "All they say is, 'This is a hate group and you shouldn't be hosting this material.'" And apparently the "abuse" alleged against Chalcedon merely consists of its being listed as a "hate group" by the SPLC.

But Chalcedon is not the SPLC's

only target. In 2017 D. James Kennedy Ministries sued the SPLC. The suit has not yet been resolved and meanwhile, many of America's most prominent Christian ministries continue to be featured on SPLC's "hate map."

U.S. Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) in April asked the Internal Revenue Service to probe the SPLC for abusing its tax-exempt status by lustily engaging in partisan politics. According to the senator's press secretary, no answer from the IRS has yet been received.

Censoring "Nobodies"

It's not just big ministries that are being censored. Private individuals, ordinary citizens, have also felt the lash. The case of "Ginger" is typical [name changed to protect her identity].

"I was permanently suspended [from Twitter] in April of 2018," Ginger told Chalcedon, "when the first wave of silencing people who were basically nobodies started. I had nearly 5,000 followers, was a Trump supporter, and refused to worship David Hogg. I got a notice that I was permanently suspended for violating Twitter's hate speech policies. No examples, no 'please remove this tweet and you're back on the platform.' Just done. Period."

Several readers on my blog² have had the same experience. Somehow communications between us got cut off, and I was unable to interview them in time to be included in this article.

I got a taste of censorship from

Facebook when they wouldn't allow me to post one of my weekly "Joe Collidge" satires: "Your message could not be sent because it includes content that other people on Facebook have reported as abusive."

What? I'd only just finished writing it a minute ago. What "other people" had had time to read it and report it as abusive? And in what way was it abuse to anyone? Facebook did not condescend to tell me, and I have never been given any explanation of their action.

Censoring the Doctor

Sometimes Big Tech's censorship tactics are more subtle.

Mercola.com, known to subscribers as "Dr. Mercola," was "buried" by Google's latest search engine update.³ His "crime" would appear to be his penchant for questioning the safety and effectiveness of certain new vaccines, including the latest measles vaccine.

Instead of banning him outright, Google's new search engine removed his pages from any generalized search pertaining to a health topic. Before the update, his pages would come up if you searched, for example, "heart disease." Now they don't. If you want to see what Dr. Mercola has to say about heart disease, you would have to search "mercola.com heart disease."

This tactic, Dr. Mercola reports, has driven down traffic to his website "by 99 percent." Almost as effective as banning him altogether.

Meanwhile, a politically conservative website, News with Views,⁴ has been banned outright by both Twitter and Google. The site has some 45,000 readers per day, but is in danger of going out of business. Big Tech can do that to you.

But so can free-lance left-wing trolls.

My wife made the mistake of accepting a Seattle leftist as a Facebook friend. With this as an entrée, his Far Left friends swarmed onto her Facebook page and flooded it with left-wing rants—including calls for President Donald Trump to die a violent death. This went on day after day until she “unfriended” the first liberal. Thankfully, his cohorts vanished with him.

The Man with Eyes Like “Hellfire”

June 26, 2019: Our website is still down, our webmaster’s still laboring to bring it back online. Meanwhile, Andrea Schwartz has dug up the 2006 “report” by the Southern Poverty Law Center that first branded Chalcedon as a “hate group.” The page is still up.⁵

This rant describes Mark Rushdoony as “peer[ing] down from the pulpit through glasses tinted the color of hellfire” and ending every sentence with an exclamation point. No one would ever recognize him from that description.

R.J. Rushdoony, Mark’s father and Chalcedon’s founder, is called “a racist and a Holocaust denier,” which he wasn’t, and accused him of trying to rearrange the world “so that everyone in it lives under strict Old Testament moral codes imposed by local theocracies,” which he didn’t. But no one from the SPLC has ever contacted Chalcedon to ask what the foundation really stands for. Not ever.

“There is no room for democracy in Reconstructionism, and no tolerance for dissent.” As if the SPLC has ever displayed even a minuscule tolerance for dissent from its positions.

Warning its readers that Chalcedon is plotting “a future in which gay men and lesbians and adulteresses [only adulteresses, and not adulterers?] will be put to death,” which is not Chalcedon’s position, the article goes on to attack all the other speakers at the conference.

This is the “evidence” for the complaint against Chalcedon. The SPLC has never taken any steps to verify a word of it.

For the left, the accusation is the evidence—as we saw plainly in last year’s Senate confirmation hearings for Brett Kavanaugh’s appointment to the Supreme Court.

Picking Their Target

How does Big Tech decide whom to censor? Obviously, Christians and conservatives are prime targets: who has ever heard of Facebook or Google censoring a leftist? So who is first in line when they decide whom to ban?

“Facebook monitors the offline behavior of its users to determine if they should be categorized as a ‘Hate Agent,’” Breitbart.com has reported.⁶

“Signals of hate” include “praising the wrong individuals,” interviewing them, or appearing at events with them; or “if you self-identify” with a “Designated Hateful Ideology”—with Facebook doing all the designating. You may even get banned for “statements made in private but later made public”—and just try to prove you didn’t say whatever it was, after you’ve been accused of saying it. The accusation is the evidence.

In all of this, Facebook itself gets to define what is “hateful,” who is a “hate agent,” which groups deserve to be “protected”—homosexuals, for instance—and which do not—heterosexual white males, usually. The lords of Facebook set their own standards and enforce them as they see fit, accountable to no one.

But that’s not all. Facebook also has a “shadow government” of 30 to 40 left-wing lawyers and former government bureaucrats who decide what some 2 billion users can say or not say.⁷ The *Vanity Fair* article, written with Facebook’s cooperation, makes grim reading for anyone who’s not enthusiastic about very small groups of people dominating very large ones.

Their goal is to purge Facebook of any and all expressions of “hate,” as defined by themselves. Consider their

presuppositions, clearly laid out in the article. “Rights” are granted by the government, with Facebook taking upon itself the delineation of free speech rights. People are to be sorted into groups, by Facebook, with government and Facebook deciding which groups need protection from other people’s speech, and how much protection they need relative to that enjoyed by other groups, and how much each group is to receive. All “genders” are real, and no one but a “hater” would ever dissent from that position: if anyone does, ban him.

These people take themselves very seriously indeed.

Morning, June 27, 2019: Our website is up and running again, after support staff worked on it all night. We still don’t know exactly what caused the website to go down. What we do know is that attacks on Chalcedon by assorted leftists have been a constant feature of our landscape over the years.

The Dirty Jobs

Elsewhere in Facebook’s censorship factory, some 15,000 “content moderators” view billions of posts—the standard is a thousand a week for each moderator—to weed out content that doesn’t conform to Facebook’s labyrinthine “community standards”—whatever they mean by “community.”⁸

Some of the content offered for posting would violate just about anybody’s community standards—videos of animal abuse and cruelty, child abuse, violence, and more. You would think, with so much sheer filth pouring in every day, that the social media wouldn’t have time to indulge in mere viewpoint censorship. But the moderators who get the dirty jobs are hired as contract labor and aren’t paid that much.

Why Are They Doing It?

Other than their obvious commitment to Far Left politics, and their passion that their vision should prevail over everybody else’s, why are Big Tech and groups like the SPLC going overboard with censorship?

Project Veritas has turned up a Google executive who said, on recorded

video, that Google and its allies desire to control the outcome of the next presidential election to prevent “another Trump situation.”⁹ Google, she said, is committed to “never letting someone like Donald Trump come to power again.” If you thought it was up to the voters of America to decide who wins the White House, you may be a bit behind the times.

Project Veritas’ video was quickly scrubbed from YouTube and censored from other social media platforms; but the cat was already out of the bag.

The executive urged Senator Elizabeth Warren to desist from her calls for the government to break up Google simply because it’s too big. Small companies, she said, “don’t have the resources” to prevent President Trump’s re-election—whereas Google and the rest of Big Tech are “working diligently to prevent” it.

“People like us are programmed,” the executive boasted. Their goal, she said, is to have “a single point of truth” across their entire line of products—left-wing “truth.” She admitted that Google routinely suppresses “right-wing content.”

“Right-wing content” would be anything of which Google executives disapprove, anything with which they disagree. Chalcedon does not endorse any political candidate; our concern is that Big Tech obviously pursues a clear political agenda.

What’s “Reprehensible”?

Senator Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) has introduced a bill, the “Ending Support for Internet Censorship Act,” that would strip the social media giants of certain protections they currently enjoy, unless they stop censoring views

with which they disagree.¹⁰

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act exempts social media platforms from the liability provisions that apply to publishers. The users, not the platforms, are viewed, in effect, as the publishers so that the platform is not held responsible for anything a user says. In return, the platforms are expected to provide a public forum free of viewpoint censorship—which they clearly are not doing.

Hawley’s bill is aimed at the big four, Google, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube—platforms with 30 million monthly users or more than \$500 million in global annual revenue. Smaller platforms would not be affected.

Replied a lobbyist for Google and Facebook, “This bill forces platforms to make an impossible choice: either host reprehensible but First Amendment-protected speech, or lose legal protections that allow them to moderate illegal content like human trafficking and violent extremism.”

So they only censor content because it’s “reprehensible”? If that was all they did, I wouldn’t be writing this article and you wouldn’t be reading it. Is everything that they censor to be equated with “human trafficking and violent extremism”? If that’s really the case, these people are not quite all there.

But when even the smallest dissent from a leftist position is smeared as “racism” or “hate,” we have to expect them to censor everything with which they disagree.

How Much More?

A short list of abuses currently practiced by Big Tech would include:

Drawing up lists of “protected minorities” who need for social media

to protect them from being exposed to anyone who disagrees with their position and—dare we say the word?—their privilege.

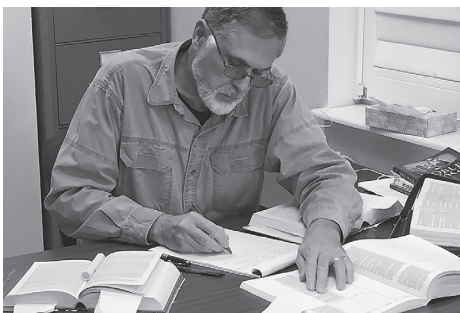
Branding as “reprehensible” viewpoints that include pro-life, pro-Second Amendment, pro-Christian, and pro-American positions.

An openly expressed desire to control the outcome of a national election, in effect disenfranchising the voters and subverting our republican form of government.

Vigorous attempts to silence anyone who questions “scientific” opinions favored by the platforms’ owners, be it an opinion as to the humanity and right to life of a baby about to be born or one on the safety and effectiveness of a new vaccine.

The list could go on just about to Doomsday. In short, we have seen that the Far Left on the Internet, including the major social media, are quick to censor virtually anything that fails their battery of ideological litmus tests. In one instance, Facebook even censored the Declaration of Independence—and on the Fourth of July, at that.¹¹

So far, it looks like Chalcedon has survived the latest attempt to stifle our ministry. We still don’t know, at this writing, exactly why our site went down. It might have been a technological glitch somewhere. But given our experiences in these matters, we can’t rule out a deliberate attack of cyber-vandalism. Our webmaster Gary Morris said, “I can’t as of yet pinpoint exactly what triggered the events that caused the site to go down. What I do know is that the server must have been restarted due to some sort of provider maintenance or another unknown event ... We don’t have conclusive evidence there were any such



Chalcedon Needs Your Support

Our objective is to help equip Christians to apply their faith and “take back” government by means of Biblical self-government. We desperately need your help to continue this mission, so please take a few moments today to prayerfully consider supporting Chalcedon with your tax-deductible giving. We’ve enclosed a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to make it easy, and you can also donate online at: Chalcedon.edu/Give

Support Chalcedon by Investing in You! Get Great Resources Today at ChalcedonStore.com

attacks. But I can't be certain at this point in time ... We are still investigating and looking for ways to remedy this situation if it happens again."

There is some pushback in Congress, and several court cases in the works. Whether there is time enough to rein in the censors' plans to direct the outcome of the next election cannot be known as yet.

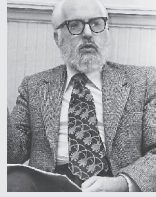
Pray that there is. 🙏

Lee Duigon is the author of the Bell Mountain Series of novels and a contributing editor for Chalcedon's periodicals. Lee provides commentary on cultural trends and relevant issues to Christians, along with providing cogent book and media reviews. Lee has his own blog at www.leeduigon.com.

1. <http://www.chalcedon.edu/>
2. <http://www.leeduigon.com/>
3. <https://www.healthglu.com/uncategorized/google-buries-mercola-in-their-latest-search-engine-update-part-1-of-2/>
4. <http://www.newswithviews.com>
5. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/chalcedon-foundation-leads-christian-reconstructionists-campaign-convert-conservative-fundamentalist-churches>
6. <https://www.sott.net/article/414995-Breitbart-Leaked-doc-reveals-Facebook-monitors-offline-behavior-to-determine-if-you-re-a-hate-agent>
7. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2019/02/men-are-scum-inside-facebook-war-on-hate-speech>
8. <https://www.foxnews.com/tech/facebook-moderator-dies-horrific-videos-others-share-disturbing-incidents>
9. <https://www.projectveritas.com/2019/06/24/insider-blows-whistle-exec-reveals-google-plan-to-prevent-trump-situation-in-2020-on-hidden-cam/>
10. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2019/06/sen-josh-hawley-introduces-ending-support-for-internet-censorship-act-to-stop-big-tech-bias/>
11. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jul/4/facebook-flags-declaration-independence-hate-speech/>

Is the First Amendment Being Used to Persecute Christians?

R. J. Rushdoony



On hundreds of state college and university campuses across the country, a major threat faces campus religious ministries which are Christian. In two federal district courts, judges have ruled that state universities may not allow such religious use of their facilities. In one case, the Christian student group was told that it could use campus facilities for a nonreligious party, or if for religious use, only twice in a quarter, with application and payment of rent. One person remarked, "It's almost as if we pay rent if we use the word 'God'; but if we add the word 'damn,' it's free." In other cases, public high schools have sought to bar Christian student groups from meeting on the premises during lunch, after school, or at any time.

In other words, if your religion is atheism or humanism, you may use school or university facilities, but not if you are a Christian.

"Years ago, someone said fascism would come to the United States in the name of fighting fascism to save freedom."

All this is done in the name of the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. But this is not all. When Christians in California organized as Californians for Biblical Morality, one newspaper called this a violation of the First Amendment. In other words, it is all right for homosexuals or prostitutes to organize for legal action, but Christians should be forbidden to attempt to influence politics.

The plain implication is that any one may have all the freedom he wants, and use public infrastructure also, provided he is not a Christian. In the name of the First Amendment, freedom is denied to Christians. Why should campus Marxists, atheists, humanists, and homosexuals have freedom, but not Christian students? What kind of judges are we appointing to the bench, that they use the First Amendment to deny freedom to Christians?

Years ago, someone said fascism would come to the United States in the name of fighting fascism to save freedom. I was reminded of that when I learned that someone who wants freedom denied to Christian groups insisted that he is thereby fighting fascism!

The days of freedom are numbered in the United States if such things continue. And continue they will as long as most people are indifferent to the growth of bigger and bigger civil government and the decline of our freedom. Are we any better off today for having concentrated so much statist power in Washington, D.C., and the state capitol? Unless we begin to change things, we will soon be no more than slaves of the state.

Taken from Rushdoony's *Our Threatened Freedom: A Christian View on the Menace of American Statism*.
Get your copy today at ChalcedonStore.com.

